

EXHIBIT J

NEWS

Savannah man sentenced to 20 years in prison

Anthony Oliver banned from South Georgia for aggravated stalking

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Anthony Oliver on Wednesday was sentenced to 20 years to serve in prison for his convictions for aggravated stalking of the mother of his two children that the judge said “put the victim through 17 years or more of absolute hell.”

“I believe the defendant is a narcissist,” Chatham County Superior Court Judge Timothy R. Walmsley said.

His sentence was imposed with the possibility of parole, but included a series of parole conditions that will bar Oliver, 38, from any contact with the victim or her family. Walmsley said he would consider expanding the protected group.

Walmsley also barred Oliver from a series of four judicial circuits, including Chatham County and effectively the southern half of Georgia, and ordered all provisions in the existing protective order to remain in effect, twice commenting on the negative impact Oliver has had on the community.

He ordered Oliver to complete family violence and anger management programs while in prison. He also ordered that any filings Oliver wished to make in the state require court pre-approval.

A jury took 15 minutes on Sept. 26 to convict Oliver of aggravated stalking by violating a permanent family violence protective order from Effingham County Superior Court during a Feb. 24, 2019, encounter with a third party at Logan's Roadhouse in Pooler, as well as criminal attempt to commit the felony of aggravated stalking in the same encounter.

They also convicted him for making a false statement to Pooler police officer Christopher Dotson during an April 2 arrest for aggravated stalking of the victim.

During the sentencing, Walmsley read a victim-impact statement from the victim as well as two e-mails Oliver sent on Tuesday from Chatham County jail to Chatham County District Attorney Investigator Adina Ripley.

The content of those items are not made public, but Walmsley referred to two letters previously in evidence from Oliver to Chatham County Chief Judge Penny Haas Freesemann and District Attorney Meg Heap. The content of those letters remain under court seal.

But the judge indicated they contained implied threats and expressed his concern that Oliver might reach out to others while incarcerated.

When the judge addressed a notebook that Oliver maintained containing contact information on court personnel and was discussed at an earlier hearing, Walmsley said he would order it to remain in Sheriff John Wilcher's custody until a court order released it.

In response, defense lawyer Martin Hilliard said Oliver consented to have it destroyed and Walmsley so ordered "with the defendant's consent."

Prior to trial, Oliver rejected a plea-sentence offer from prosecutors that would have allowed him a 20-year sentence with eight to serve and the remainder on probation with special conditions.

Oliver chose not to testify in his defense.

Court testimony

The victim testified that constant harassment by the defendant left her in a state of constant fear.

"I was scared," she told jurors. "I'm always in fear because I don't know what he's capable of doing."

Testimony showed that Oliver harassed and intimidated — in some cases physically attacking the victim in California, Arizona, Minnesota, Tennessee and finally Effingham County. Each time she moved with the two children he found her, testimony showed.

Evidence showed that Oliver constantly contacted the victim in what the defense contends were unsuccessful attempts to see his two children.

The children had no contact with the defendant for 11 years until 2017, because "I was scared not to," the victim testified.

"I thought things would calm down and would be OK," she said. "They (the children) were wanting to see him. Because they don't know him, I felt like guilt."

The Feb. 24 incident occurred while a permanent family violence protective order barring Oliver from contact with family members was in effect, including through a third party, evidence showed.

That contact was reported to the victim that same date while she was on a trip to a wildlife refuge with her two children, testimony showed.

Chatham County Assistant District Attorney Garrett Emmons on Wednesday urged Walmsley to sentence Oliver to serve 20 years in prison for what he called "a 17 years of psychologically abusive relationship. ... He terrorized this woman."

"This is a man who cannot control himself," Emmons said, adding that Oliver had shown no ability to comply with court orders. "This is a man who needs to be in a controlled environment."

Hilliard, the defense lawyer, characterized the case as one of Christmas gifts Oliver had for his children and argued that the offenses that Oliver was convicted of could be considered as misdemeanors for sentencing.

He urged a year or two jail sentence followed by probation to include banishment from Chatham County or the state of Georgia.

In January, Oliver declared his intent to run in the November election to be Savannah's next mayor with a pledge to reduce crime, but did not qualify in August.

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